

REMARKS

The present application was filed on June 15, 2000 with claims 1-14. Claims 5, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 17 have been canceled, claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14 and 15 are pending, and claims 1, 8, 12 and 15 are the pending independent claims.

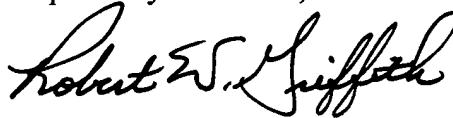
In the outstanding Office Action dated June 16, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,164,975 to Weingarden et al. (hereinafter "Weingarden") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,732,331 to Alexander (hereinafter "Alexander").

Applicants acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 6, 9 and 13.

With regard to the rejection, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 8, 12 and 15 to recite the allowable subject matter of claims 6, 9 and 13 in an effort to expedite the application through to issuance. Claims 6, 9 and 13 have been canceled without prejudice. Dependent claims 2-4, 7, 10, 11 and 14 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claims 1, 8 and 12, respectively. Dependent claims 2-4, 7, 10, 11 and 14 also recite patentable subject matter in their own right.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14 and 15 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,



Date: August 31, 2005

Robert W. Griffith  
Attorney for Applicant(s)  
Reg. No. 48,956  
Ryan, Mason & Lewis, LLP  
90 Forest Avenue  
Locust Valley, NY 11560  
(516) 759-4547